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AUTHOR Rothberg, Robert A.
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ABSTRACT

This proposal is predicated on the assumption that in order to improve instruction, formative assistance must be conceptually separated from summative evaluation. Teacher improvement requires the involvement of other teachers, department chairs, students, parents, and administrators, whereas summative evaluation is separate from the growth process and should only involve the administrator and the teacher. Accordingly, the first part of the proposal is devoted strictly to the formative evaluation process, outlined in six steps: (1) teacher awareness activities; (2) a professional growth plan; (3) ongoing conferences, observation, and feedback between teacher and peer-coach throughout the year; (4) monitoring of staff members' growth plan by department chairs; (5) conferences with outside consultant; and (6) a written self-evaluation by teacher submitted to the principal at the end of the school year. The second part, on the summative system, lists typical minimum performance expectations for use by the principal and teaching staff. Appraisal of these minimum expectations is made through the administrator's daily interaction with staff, and recorded on a formal assessment instrument to satisfy legal requirements. Assessment of minimum competency should be distinct, however, from teachers' professional growth process. (TE)

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"HELPING TEACHERS GET BETTER: A STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROJECT THAT WORKS"

Robert A. Rothberg
College of Education
University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida 32816

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Introduction

Everyone would probably agree that teacher evaluation is necessary in any educational endeavor. Questions arise, however, when one attempt to provide for the improvement of instruction within the traditional administrative procedure called teacher assessment.

The following proposal separates teacher improvement (formative process) from determining whether personnel meet minimal expectations; whether one should be rehired; modification of assignments; and rewarding superior performance (summative education). Teacher improvement - or professional growth - needs to involve many people - the teacher him/herself; other teachers; department chairmen or grade level chairmen; students; parents outside individuals; and even the administrator! The summative evaluation plan is separate and apart from the growth process and should only involve the administration and the teacher. The following suggestions are not revolutionary or even new to the field. They are not, however, happening with much frequency in American schools. It would appear to be an important consideration to those concerned with improving the quality of education.

I. The Formative Process

The formative process is concerned with the improvement of instruction. It is an ongoing professional development plan that could involve the teacher, a peer-coach, the administrator, and possibly, and outside consultant.

This process considers many teachers to be self directed professionals

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concerned with professional growth. It implies that a good number of teachers know what they can do better but are often unable to find solutions without help from others. (Rothberg, 1979)

Administrators may be helpful, but because of their appraisal role, they have difficulty developing a climate of trust. Therefore, other teachers, department chairmen, and/or outside consultants can be helpful in providing appropriate feedback.

When Is Help Helpful? Steps In The Process:

1. Activities to develop teacher awareness, understanding, and internalizing of what is effective teaching and how it relates to him/her specifically should occur initially. One way to begin this training is in a two day (12 hours) work session early in the school year where staff members can examine teacher effectiveness research; complete self assessments; identify a staff member with whom to team; identify growth goals (teacher, learner, program, organization); develop action plans; and analyze observation and feedback still development.
2. Each teacher will submit a Professional Growth Plan to the principal and discuss it in a "goal setting" conference early in the school year. This plan should include the goal setting for the year and the strategy to accomplish these objectives. The strategy needs to be specific, challenging, realistic, manageable, and measureable, if at all possible.
3. Ongoing conferencing, observation, feedback between the teacher and his/her peer-coach throughout the school year will occur. This means, of course, that teachers will have to make time to talk to one another and that the administration will be supportive in covering classrooms and facilitating observation and conferencing time.

4. One day each grading period, department chairmen will monitor progress of the staff member's growth plan. The chairman and teachers conference to discuss, modify and adjust action plans. The objective in this relationship is to provide additonal non-judgmental feedback of a helping rather than an evaluative nature.
5. Throughout the year, an outside consultant will conference with teachers, observe upon request, discuss action growth plans, speak with chairmen, and in other ways, attempt to facilitate teacher's professional growth. Having someone from the "outside" who can stimulate the group can be helpful and keep the organization thinking about improvement goals. It is easy to forgo developmental activities in the press of day-to-day problems.
6. At the end of the school year, each teacher will submit a written analysis of how well the growth plan progressed to the principal and will discuss it at the end of the year conference. "How well did I do in accomplishing my goal(s) for the year", needs to be addressed within a supportive environment separate and apart from, "How Many Satisfactories" and "Needs Improvement" did I get?

II. The Summative System

Minimum performance expectations should be developed by the principal and teaching staff and formalized in a job description. The following items are typically included and evaluated:

1. Meets and instructs students at designated locations and times.
2. Develops and maintains a classroom environment commensurate with the teacher's style, norms of the building program, appropriate to a classroom activity, and within the limits of the resources provided by the district.

3. Prepare for assigned classes and shows written evidence of preparation and implementation on request of the immediate supervisor.
4. Set and maintain acceptable standards of classroom behavior.
5. Provides an effective program of instruction based on the needs and capabilities of the individuals or student groups involved. This should include, but not limited to:
   a. Review of previously taught material, as needed.
   b. Presentation of new material.
   c. Use of a variety of teaching materials and techniques.
   d. Provide for continuous checking of student understanding.
   e. Evaluation of student progress on a regular basis.
6. Correlates individual instructional objectives with the philosophy, goals and objective slated for the district.
7. Takes all necessary and reasonable precautions to protect students, equipment, materials and facilities.
8. Maintains records as required by law and administrative regulations.
9. Assists in upholding and enforcing school rules, administrative regulations.
10. Makes provision for being available to students and parents for education related purposes outside the instructional day when necessary and under reasonable terms.
11. Attends and participates in faculty, department and district meetings.
12. Cooperates with other members of the staff in planning instructional goals, objectives and methods.
13. Assists in the selection of books, equipment and other instructional materials.
14. Works to establish and maintain open lines of communication with students,

parents and colleagues concerning both the academic and behavioral progress of all students.

15. Establishes and maintains cooperative professional relations with others.
16. Performs related duties as assigned by the administration in accordance with school policies and practices. (McGreal, 1983)

The appraisal of these minimum expectations will typically be made through the administrator's daily contact and interaction with the staff member. When problems occur in these areas, the staff member will be contacted by the principal to remind the staff member of minimum expectations in the problem area and to provide whatever assistance might be helpful. If the problem continues or recurs, the principal, in his/her discretion, may prepare and issue to the teacher a written notice setting forth the specific deficiency with a copy of the teacher's file. In the unlikely event that serious, intentional or flagrant violations of the minimum performance expectations occur, the principal, at his discretion, may put aside the recommended procedure and make a direct recommendation for more formal and immediation action.

State law generally requires a formal assessment instrument to be on file. An assessment instrument can be developed from the items previously described and evaluated using a simple type of "yes" or "no" scale. In other words, these things are either done or they aren't without any degree of competency consideration.

Annual contract teachers might be evaluated differently from continuing contract or tenured teachers, the difference usually being a quantitative factor. That is, the annual contract teacher might have more formal observations and written evaluations than the tenured teachers during the year.

The principal could also, at his/her discretion, ask the teacher to com-

plete the form as a self assessment procedure. If one is truly concerned with improvement of instruction, this minimal competency requirement probably has little meaning other than satisfying a legal requirement.

Summary

The basic assumption in this plan is that separation of formative assistance from the summative evaluation must occur in order to provide for the improvement of instruction. These two functions must be clearly identified with necessary time and effort spent in instructional improvement goals. It is logical to assume that if more time is spent examining teaching effectiveness and if the process is shared by many individuals in the school, the opportunity for better instruction is possible. Most current systems only provide for evaluation and do little to assist individuals in analyzing their performance. How much time and effort can we afford to expend in this endeavor? The real issue is -- are we really willing to pay the price and make the sacrifices necessary in order to do a better job and help teachers do a better job of teaching?

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